

February 10, 2012

Rachel Miller, Attorney  
Caroline Antholt, Risk Management  
Peninsula School District

This letter is a follow-up from our meeting on February 10, 2012, during which time you interviewed me relating to an incident which took place on February 2, 2012. The incident centered around a few students who were engaged in horseplay during my Kopatime class. Because only notes were taken during our meeting, I thought it would be appropriate for me to submit a written statement outlining our discussion and reiterating the statement I provided to you.

Our meeting concerned the conduct occurring in my Kopatime class on February 2, 2012. On this date, I went to teach my Kopatime class, located in the choir room, at 8:10 AM. I took roll at 8:15 and then the class rose for the flag salute. Up to this day, my Kopatime class has been very busy learning how to debate, research issues, and discussions on the dangers of drugs, explore testing, reading for content, and discussing short stories from the Book of Virtues. We have only taken one break and that was for a team building activity in the gym during early October. There has been little if any downtime for my students because of the volume of work they have been engaged in. In fact, my class did not participate in the holiday door decorating nor did we have any classroom parties during any holiday. Students have consistently been on task and have worked diligently on learning about various topics.

On February 2, 2012, I came into class a bit tired from lack of sleep the previous night. [REDACTED]

After the flag salute, I turned around and [REDACTED] jumped on the back of [REDACTED] on the choir stage. The choir stage is a large open area that is uncluttered by desks or other obstructions. Next, [REDACTED] and a few other boys began wrestling and horse playing with one another. There was absolutely no punching or potential harmful play. I told the kids not to hurt one another and let them wrestle around a bit. [REDACTED] absolutely went along with the horseplay and never once complained or instructed anyone to stop. In fact, [REDACTED] and the other boys all appeared to be having fun wrestling around and playing with each other. None of the kids involved gave any indication they were being harmed or were

made to feel uncomfortable by their interactions. I was aware the students interactions were being video recorded. I can honestly say that at the time I did not believe that any of the children were at risk of harm during their interactions. Nor did I view the incident as anything more than harmless childhood horse play and a chance for the kids to take a break from the daily grind.

This all took place in about 14 minutes. I then brought the class back into order and we went back to the planned lesson. Not one student complained about being sore, hurt, assaulted or this being a form of child abuse. I then finished the day's lesson with the remaining 10 minutes of class.

As I mentioned during our meeting, I have taught wrestling at KMS for the past 14 years and have been involved in the sport of wrestling for the past 30+ years. I know the difference between inflicting pain versus innocent horseplay. At the time of this interaction in my class, I did not believe that any of my students were at risk of injury or undue pain. I simply viewed the interaction as a matter of boys will be boys and allowing the kids a diversion from the normal after a long period of intense studies.

It should be noted that last year [REDACTED] had Mr. Durham for 2nd period PE. I had planning during this period. Every day I walked through the gym to get to my office. On a regular basis [REDACTED] would jump on my back, push me into the wall, hit me in my shoulder or stomach, grab my leg and attempt to tackle me, etc. I never reprimanded him or wrote him up. I knew he was kidding around with me and that he had no intent on causing harm. In my experience, sometimes this is the way kids connect with teachers. [REDACTED] is small in stature which is exactly how I was when I was his age. Thus, I can relate at the methods he used to gain attention. [REDACTED] is a great kid and has never been a discipline problem in my class.

In retrospect, I recognize the choir room and my kopatime class was not an appropriate setting to allow the kids to engage in horseplay. I sincerely apologize that I permitted this incident to occur within my class. I will certainly view it as a learning experience for me as a teacher.

Sincerely,

John Rosi    Teacher: Kopachuck Middle School